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SOURCE Tonga Ilbo

SOUTH KOREAN PAPER SPECULATES ON CAUSES OF NORTH KOREAN PURGE

An editorial of Tonga Ilbo dated 12 August 1953 discounted all the official charges placed against the North Korean leaders purged recently. It wrote, "No one with a sound mind will believe the nature of crimes allegedly committed by the Pak Hon-yong faction as reported by Tass." Citing the fact that Ho Ka-ui, reputedly a Beriya man, was not included in the North Korean purge list, the paper also discounted the possibility of a connection between the North Korean purge and the purge of Beriya. It also rejected the idea that the purge was a result of friction between the Soviet and the China factions, by pointing out the fact that Pak and other purgees belonged to neither of these factions.

Tonga Ilbo advanced the opinion that the purge was a result of a feud between the North and South Korean Labor Party factions. The paper said that Pak, who led the South Korean Labor Party and wielded a greater power than Kim Il-song, had attempted to overthrow Kim by taking advantage of the brief relaxation of the Kremlin's hold on North Korea [following Stalin's death], but that Kim had discovered the attempt in time to dispose of Pak. The paper further said that Pak's influence was nevertheless weaker than that of Ho Ka-ui, who as a special Soviet "agent" was in effect the premier until Stalin's death.

Another report on the purge in the same paper quoted a Reuters dispatch from Seoul saying that the recent purge presages a power struggle between Kim Il-song and his longtime political rival the pro-Chinese Kim Tu-pong, chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly. According to that Reuters report, the Seoul police asserted that some of the purged North Koreans were supporters of a powerful front against Kim Il-song led by Kim Tu-pong.

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